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Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 15903

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, EEC, IMF
SUBJ: DATA ON COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT ORTOLI FOR
IMF/IBRD SEPTEMBER MEETING

REF: (A) STATE 206653 (B) BRUSSELS 15848
(C) BRUSSELS 10172

1. THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND INFORMATION IS SUPPLIED ON EC COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT ORTOLI WHO WILL HEAD THE EC COMMISSION OBSERVER DELEGATION TO THE IMF/IBRD MEETING IN WASHINGTON SEPTEMBER 1978. VICE PRESIDENT HAFERKAMP WILL NOT BE ATTENDING THIS MEETING.

2. BECAUSE OF HIS EXPERIENCES AS EC COMMISSION PRESIDENT FOR FOUR YEARS, HIS MASTERY OF EC COMMISSION TECHNICALITIES, AND HIS COMPETENCE IN THE EC ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS, ORTOLI PLAYS A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE EC COMMISSION AND IS HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL AMONG HIS THIRTEEN COLLEAGUES. HE IS CONSIDERED BY MANY EC OFFICIALS TO BE BRILLIANT, AND HIS TECHNOCRATIC STYLE HAS EARNED HIM THE REPUTATION AS A "NUTS AND BOLTS MAN PAR EXCELLENCE." SOME DESCRIBE ORTOLI AS A HARD-DRIVING ADMINISTRATOR AND OPERATOR WITH A SUPERB UNDERSTANDING OF INDUSTRIAL AND
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DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS. HE IS AND WILL REMAIN IN AN IMPORTANT POSITION REGARDING HIGH-LEVEL FORMULATION OF THE EC'S ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL POLICIES. AS COMMISSION PRESIDENT, HE WAS A CONVINCED BELIEVER IN THE IMMINENCE AND DESIRABILITY OF ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION. AFTER YEARS OF EFFORT AND FAILURE, HE MOVED TO THE OPINION THAT ECONOMIC INTEGRATION WAS GOING TO BE A STEP-

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BY-STEP PROCESS. PARADOXICALLY, AT JUST THIS TIME JENKINS, SCHMIDT AND GISCARD BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO A EUROPEAN MONETARY SYSTEM APPROACH.
3. CONCERNING HIS ROLE IN FORMULATION OF EC POLICIES, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE COMMISSION HAS AN UPHILL FIGHT IN EFFORTS TO DEVELOP OVERALL MACROECONOMIC POLICY. WITH THAT SAID, WE BELIEVE ORTOLI TO BE RESPECTED BY AND INFLUENTIAL WITH MEMBER STATE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL MINISTERS. IN ADDITION, UNLIKE HIS PREDECESSOR, HE HAS DEVELOPED CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE HEADS OF THE NATIONAL CENTRAL BANKS AND REGULARLY ATTENDS THE BASEL MEETINGS. THUS HE IS AT THE CENTER OF COMMUNITY POLICY MAKING AND WE BELIEVE IT TO BE AN ERROR TO UNDERESTIMATE HIS IMPORTANCE AS A POLICY MAKER.
4. AS FOR STYLE, HE GIVES AN IMPRESSION OF ALOOFNESS AND DISTANCE WHICH APPEARS TO BE THE HALLMARK OF THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATIVE ELITE GRADUATING FROM THE ECOLE NATIONALE D'ADMINISTRATION. SOME SEE IN THE ORTOLI STYLE THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES: MODESTY, PATIENCE, ABSOLUTE DISCRETION AND A WELL CAMOUFLAGED STUBBORN STREAK. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT HE IS TIMID AND NERVOUS IN PUBLIC AND SOMETIMES HESITATES TOO LONG BEFORE MAKING MAJOR DECISIONS. OFFICIALS WHO HAVE WORKED WITH ORTOLI ADMIRE HIS APPARENT STRAIGHTFORWARD, PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO PROBLEMS AND HIS ABILITY TO INSPIRE CONFIDENCE IN THOSE AROUND HIM. PRIVATELY, HE IS RELAXED, WARM IN PERSONAL RELATIONS, WITH CONFIDENTIAL

A SENSE OF HUMOR MASKING A BASIC SHYNESS. FURTHERMORE, HE IS AN EXTRAORDINARY RACONTEUR.
5. AS A NEGOTIATOR, HE IS CAUTIOUS AND, PERHAPS IN THIS JOB AT LEAST, OVERLY SENSITIVE TO THE NEED FOR CONSENSUS AND THUS NOT SUFFICIENTLY AGGRESSIVE WITH THE MEMBER STATES.
6. BECAUSE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS OF THE EC, HE IS CONSTRAINED AND NOT FREE AT ALL TO MAKE DECISIONS DURING NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER, HIS FRENCH MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCES AND THOSE DURING HIS TENURE AS COMMISSION PRESIDENT SHOW US THAT WITHOUT INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS HE WAS PREPARED TO MAKE DECISIONS.
7. HE IS CAUTIOUS WITH PROMISES BUT HAS A GOOD RECORD OF KEEPING HIS WORD. HIS VIEWS AND ATTITUDES CAN BE INFLUENCED BY SUBSTANTIVE ARGUMENTS.
8. POLITICALLY, FORMER EC PRESIDENT ORTOLI APPEARS TO HAVE EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH PRESENT EC COMMISSION PRESIDENT ROY JENKINS. HE SEEMS QUITE HAPPY WITH THE ROLE OF VICE PRESIDENT FOR ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS. HE IS A GAULLIST, BUT A POMPIDOU GAULLIST. HE MAINTAINS CLOSE CONNECTIONS WITH THE GAULLIST FORCES IN FRANCE, BUT HE DOES NOT SEEM ATTRACTED BY CHIRAC'S BRAND OF GAULLISM. HIS

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RELATIONS WITH THE GISCARD GOVERNMENT HAVE NEVER BEEN WARM, BUT GISCARD DID REAPPOINT HIM TO THE EC COMMISSION. SOME BELIEVE HE WILL EVENTUALLY CHOOSE, AFTER HIS TOUR IN BRUSSELS, TO HEAD A NATIONALIZED COMPANY IN FRANCE OR WILL JOIN THE ACADEMIC WORLD. HINTON

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